

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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FM AMEMBASSY SOFIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8557

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: OVIP (POPOV, IVAN)

SUBJECT: POPOV VISIT

1. AT OPENING CEREMONIES OF PLOVDIV FAIR SEPT 3, CHIEF OF PROTOCOL BOGOMIL GERASSIMOV INFORMED US THAT HE WILL BE ACCOMPANYING POPOV TO WASHINGTON AND PROBABLY ALSO DURING ELEMENTS OF UNOFFICIAL PORTION OF VISIT. GERASSIMOV WOULD BE NOMINALLY POPOV'S INTERPRETER, BUT HE IS MUCH MORE. HE DOES SPEAK FLUENT ENGLISH AND FRENCH, BUT HE RANKS AS A SENIOR OFFICIAL EVEN THOUGH HE WILL BE LISTED AMONG THE "EXPERTS" AND NOT AMONG PRINCIPALS OF THE POPOV PARTY.

2. IT WOULD BE WRONG TO SAY THAT GERASSIMOV COMPARES WITH OUR WHITE HOUSE CHIEF OF PROTOCOL BECAUSE AMBASSADOR BORIS DZHIBROV IS HANDLING PROTOCOL BOTH FOR THE FOREIGN MINISTRY AND THE COUNCIL OF STATE, THUS HAVING THE TITLE OF "CHIEF OF PROTOCOL OF THE BULGARCRN GOVERNMENT". BUT GERASSIMOV AS CHIEF OF PROTOCOL OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS IS A PERSON OF SUBSTANCE. HE IS, INCIDENTALLY, ALSO PERSONABLE, MODEST, AND IN OUR DEALINGS WITH HIM ALMOST INVARIABLY HELPFUL.

3. HE IMMEDIATELY INQUIRED WHO WILL BE HIS OPPOSITE NUMBER IN WASHINGTON AND WHO IN OUR OPINION WOULD BE PERSON WITH RANK EQUIVALENT TO POPOV'S AS FIRST DEPUTY PREMIER; AND IN THAT CONNECTION FISHED FOR COMMENTS

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ON THE PRACTICABILITY OF POPOV CALLING ON GOVERNOR

ROCKEFELLER. WE SAID IN ANY CASE ROCKEFELLER WILL
PROBABLY NOT EVEN HAVE BEEN SWORN IN AS VICE PRESIDENT
WHEN POPOV IS IN WASHINGTON. GERASSIMOV WONDERED IF
THIS NEED PREVENT AN INFORMAL MEETING. WE SAID THIS
WOULD NOT BE PRACTICAL, BUT STATE MAY HEAR ABOUT THIS
IDEA ALSO FROM AMBASSADOR POPOV.
HERZ

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